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# Message Text

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44
ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 DODE-00 AID-10 PRS-01 USIA-04

DPW-01 IO-03 L-02 EUR-10 RSR-01 /084 W
---------- 130111
R 050545 Z JUL 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4117
USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 12038

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, VS
SUBJECT: MR 2 SITREP JULY 4

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON FROM NHA TRANG JULY 4
REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE NHA TRANG 0669

1. SECURITY SITUATION: MOST OF MR 2 WAS CALM OVER PAST 48-
HOUR PERIOD; THERE WAS A TOTAL OF ONLY 23 INCIDENTS. INCIDENTS
WERE CONCENTRATED, TYPICALLY, IN KONTUM, WHILE REST OF REGION
EXPERIENCED ONLY LIGHT, SCATTERED MILITARY ACTIONS. ELEVEN INCIDENTS
OCCURRED IN KONTUM, FOUR IN BINH DINH, THREE EACH IN PHU YEN AND
PLEIKU, AND ONE EACH IN BINH THUAN AND QUANG DUC. INCIDENTS INCLUDED
11 ENEMY GROUND ASSAULTS, SIX ATTACKS BY FIRE, FIVE MININGS, AND
ONE RF PATROL RESULTING IN DISCOVERY OF 12 VC/ NVA BODIES AND
SEVERAL WEAPONS. VNAF FLEW 47 " TRAINING AND REHEARSAL" MISSIONS
DURING PERIOD: 45 IN KONTUM AND TWO IN BINH DINH. CASUALTIES
RESULTING FROM ALL ACTIONS OVER PERIOD: VC/; NVA: 42 KIA, ONE
CAPTURED; RVNAF: NDEVEN KIA, 32 WIA, 11 MIA. ( COMMENT: KONTUM
POLOFF CAUTIONS THAT, FOR SECURITY OR OTHER REASONS, THESE
REPORTS OF FRIENDLY CASUALTIES IN KONTUM ARE PROBABLY UNDERSTATED
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CONSIDERABLY. END COMMENT).

2. POLOFF REPORTS THAT AIRSTRIKES AND ARTILLERY WEST OF
KONTUM CITY WERE PARTICULARLY HEAVY JULY 3, AND THAT ONE ARVN

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UNIT TO THE NORTHEAST OF TRUNG NGHIA CAPTURED A LOCAL POSITION AND COUNTED 30 BODIES PLUS SEVERAL DESTROYED MORTAR POSITIONS. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT OF MAJOR FORCES IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA OF TRUNG NGHIA. MEANWHILE SOUTH OF THE DAK BLA RIVER A BATTALION OF REINFORCEMENTS FROM THE 47 TH REGIMENT APDIVED JULY 3 AND IS MOVING UP. EAST OF TRUNG NGHIA, ACTION WAS APPARENTLY SOMEWHAT LESS INTENSE THAN IT HAS BEEN IN RECENT DAYS, AND POLOFF REPORTS THERE IS SPECULATION AT 23 RD DIV HQ THAT THE ENEMY MAY HAVE WITHDRAWN MANY OF THEIR FORCES, BUT HE BELIEVES THIS IS ONLY WISHFUL THINKING.

3. POLOFF REPORTS THAT THERE WERE 14 AIRPLANES INVOLVED IN THE JULY 2 AIRSTRIKE AGAINST PHUNG HOANG II AIRSTRIP AT DAK TO. ON THE SAME DAY, ACCORDING TO WHAT MAJ JONES OF PLEIKU CANDEL SAID IN CONVERSATION JULY 4, CANADIANS AT BEN HET SAW VNAF AIRPLANE BUZZ THE BEN HET STRIP AND THEN HEARD EXPLOSION, SAW SMOKE IN SKY, AND HEARD A THUD LIKE THE CRASH OF AN AIRPLANE. CANADIANS BELIEVE PLANE WAS SHOT DOWN, BUT DID NOT ACTUALLY SEE CRASH AND HAVE NOT BEEN PERMITTED BY PRG TO LEAVE COMPOUND AND MAKE OBSERVATION. CANADIANS CONJECTURE THAT PRG RELUCTANCE TO ALLOW OBSERVATION IS DUE TO PRESENCE OF PRG SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT STORED IN IMMEDIATE AREA.

4. BGEN CAM, 23 RD DIV COMMANDER, ON JULY 4 TOLD POLOFF HE RECEIVED A HIGHLY AGITATED LETTER FROM PRG REFERRING TO BOMBING OF AIRSTRIP NEAR DAK TO AND STATING THEY PLANNED TO TAKE " APPROPRIATE ACTION" IN REPLY. CAM HAS NO BOMB- DAMAGE ASSESSMENT, BUT CLAIMED NOT TO CARE PARTICULARLY AS THE ACT ITSELF MORE IMPORTANT THAN RESULTS. HE INDICATED THAT RVNAF HAVE NO PRESENT INTENTIONS TO BOMB PHUNG HOANG II AGAIN OR TO BOMB OTHER AIRFIELDS IN PRG- CONTROLLED TERRITORY, BUT WOULD NOT HESITATE TO UNDERTAKE SUCH ACTIONS AGAIN IF FUTURE CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANTED.

5. AT 4 TH OF JULY CELEBRATION IN NHA TRANG MGEN TOAN, MR 2 COMMANDER, TOLD POLOFF HE THOUGHT THE ENEMY' S PURPOSE IN HOLDING SO TENACIOUSLY TO POLEI KRONG AND TRUNG NGHIA VILLAGES WAS PRIMARILY FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND MORALE.
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SECONDARILY THE VILLAGES WOULD ASLO HAVE A STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE IN THE EVENT OF AN ENEMY DECISION TO TAKE KONTUM; TOAN SEEMED TO THINK SUCH A DECISION IS A REAL POSSIBILITY SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE. TOAN NOTED THAT THERE IS ALSO AN IMPORTANT MORALE CONSIDERATION INVOLVED FROM THE RVNAF POINT OF VIEW, REQUIRING THAT THE VILLAGES BE RETAKEN. TOAN SAID HE THOUGHT PRESIDENT THIEU WAS PLEASED WITH HIS VISIT TO KONTUM AND SATISFIED WITH THE DEFNESE THAT THE RVNAF HAVE PUT UP AND THE PROGRESS THAT THEY HAVE MADE. IN PARTICULAR, ENEMY ARTILLERY COMING FROM WEST OF THE POKO RIVER HAS SIGNIFICANTLY DIMINISHED AS A RESULT, TOAN SAID, OF SUCCESSFUL AIRSTRIKES AND COUNTER ARTILLERY FIRE. " WE WILL RETAKE THE VILLAGES," TOAN SAID.

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6. SEVERAL CLASHES REPORTED OVER LAST TEN DAYS OR SO BETWEEN RF AND ENEMY FORCES IN NORTHERN KIEN DUC DISTRICT, QUANG DUC INDICATE POSSIBLE GVN EFFORT TO MOVE BACK INTO " OLD BU PRANG" AREA IN NORTH PORTION OF KIEN DUC. THAT AREA WAS UNOFFICIALLY CEDED TO THE COMMUNISTS LONG AGO BUT RECENT INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INDICATING THAT ENEMY IS CONSTRUCTING SEVERAL STORAGE AND STAGING IMPLACEMENTS THERE MAY HAVE GOADED QUANG DUC PROVINCE CHIEF INTO LAUNCHING LIMITED OFFENSIVE. MOST RECENT ACTION THERE WAS REPORTED AS ENEMY GROUND ATTACK ON RF COMPANY JULY 2 RESULTING IN SEVEN RF MIA; ENEMY CASUALTIES UNKNOWN.

7. EXPECTED PRG DELEGATION FAILS TO ARRIVE IN KONTUM: THE PRG DELEGATION WHICH WAS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE IN KONTUM JULY 3 DID NOT APPEAR. POLOFF KONTUM CONJECTURES THAT ABSENCE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN RELATED TO JULY 2 BOMBING OF DAK TO AIRSTRIP BY VNAF. PRIOR TO AIRSTRIKE, PROV REP PLEIKU REPORTED THAT COL. TRAN, GVN REP TO TPJMC, SAID HE ALREADY HAD HIS INSTRUCTIONS AND WAS PREPARED
TO NEGOTIATE WITH PRG ON THEIR DEMANDS WHICH HE UNDERSTOOD RELATE TO FREEDOM OF ACCESS TO POPULATION, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, PERSONAL SECURITY OF DELEGATES, ETC. TRAN BELIEVED AGREEMENT WOULD BE ACHIEVED, WHICH IMPLIES GVN IS PREPARED TO MEET DEMANDS. SAME PRG DELEGATION WAS TO PROCEED JULY 5 TO VISIT DUC CO AND PICK UP SIX PEOPLE FOR BRIEFINGS IN SAIGON, OF WHOM FOUR WOULD RETURN AS PERMANENT PRG DEL TO TPJMC PLEIKU. ACCURACY OF REPORTS OF THESE PLANS WAS CONFIRMED BY CANDEL AND HUNGDEL PLEIKU BEFORE BOMBING OF DAK TO AIRSTRIP BUT NOW PLANS SEEM MORE DOUBTFUL. CANDEL WAS ALREADY SKEPTICAL AS HE NOTED
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THAT, ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, PLANS FOR SETTING UP DISCUSSIONS ALWAYS BROKE DOWN.

8. FURTHERMORE, IF AND WHEN PRG DEL REACHES PLEIKU, IT MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PROCEED TO DUC CO BY HELICOPTER; GEN. TOAN SAID IN NHA TRANG JULY 4 THAT HE HAD VETOED SUCH A PLAN BECAUSE PRG MIGHT HOLD CHOPPERS HOSTAGE AND HE WOULD THEN HAVE NO ONE TO WHOM HE COULD PROTEST. INSTEAD, TOAN SAID, PRG COULD GO BETWEEN PLEIKU CITY AND DUC CO BY ROAD. SIGNED TEARE UNQUOTE
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